



Reflections

REFLECTIONS

Volume 26
1994

STAFF

C. Markell Lynch, Editor
Scott E. Lesley, Assistant Editor

Nathan Bragg
Anthony Todd Estes
Heather Love
Jason McIntosh
Gary Mitchem
Pamela Mitchem
Mandy Mooneyham

FACULTY ADVISOR

Brad Southard



Contributors

Nathan Bragg, junior Communications major

Chris V. Bridges, junior Music Education major

Anthony Todd Estes, senior Liberal Arts and

Psychology major

Ensley F. Guffey, Hermit-at-Large

Scott E. Lesley, freshman

William S. Lewis IV, freshman

Heather Love, sophomore English major

C. Markell Lynch, senior Communications major

Gary T. Mitchem, senior Biology and English major

Mandy Mooneyham, freshman Biology major

Katrina W. Ogren, junior English and Psychology major

Ty Richards, junior

Dr. James H. Taylor, professor of English

Mark Wilson, Sports Information Director

Telesa Wilson, sophomore Communications major

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Literary Contest

Each year the English Department of Gardner-Webb University sponsors a literary contest for all student submissions chosen for publication in Reflections. Faculty and non-student submissions are not eligible for the contest. All works are judged anonymously by the final contest judges. This year's judges were Dr. Kevin Binfield, Dr. Joyce Brown, Dr. William B. Stowe, and Dr. James H. Taylor.

Awards

First Place:	What can I say.	Ensley F. Guffey
Second Place:	Old grey fences	Gary T. Mitchem
Third Place:	How To View A Candle	Heather Love

Honorable Mention

To the kind lady who	Anthony Todd Estes
Old Wives' Tales	C. Markell Lynch
Dark Horses	Telesa Wilson

Art Contest

The Art Department of Gardner-Webb University has sponsored an art contest for all student submissions chosen for publication in Reflections. Faculty and nonstudent submissions are not eligible for the contest. All works are judged anonymously by the final contest judges. This year's judges were Cynthia Byers, Dr. Gail Price, Dr. Ted Vaughan, and Susan Carlisle Bell (with the Art Education Class).

Awards

First Place:	Playing the Blues	Scott Goforth
Second Place:	The Road Home	Yoshi Shinano
Third Place:	Choose Life	Sabrina Barnes

Honorable Mention

Stevie Ray Vaughan	Scott Goforth
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Playing the Blues

by: Scott Goforth





What can I say about

the feel of your flesh so smooth
against the backs of my fingers?

What words can I twist to
form the rise and curve of your breasts
and the heat they provide for my
resting arm?

I wanted to write a love poem,
but all of the best lines are taken,
and all of the ways have been
counted over and over and over
and over
again, until everyone groans at the
merest suggestion of sappy love mush.

What can I say, I with my
gut and my non-existent butt,

What can I say
that will paint a sky with
seventy-five colors of crayola,
colors that define the first circle of my
heart and leave so many more hidden
and vague?

I wanted to write you a love poem,
and show you in art what you
seem only to half believe in words.

I wanted to write us a love poem,

and smilingly enshrine the we that is me
when he is with you.

I guess I'm not much of a poet,
no phrases of immortal verse,
or eternal imagery of beauty—
hell, I can't even come up
with a decent rhyme scheme,
so I cheat and do without.
So maybe I'm not a love poet —
but I'll tell you this:
no words contain enough images,
no images enough color,
no color enough force,
no force enough truth —
but beneath my ribs
where the wet flesh is pink and
unsunned,
beneath my ribs
where blood is pumped red and
faster than speed,
beneath my ribs,
there are universe incarnate,
and they are yours.

By: Ensely F. Guffey



Harmon

(Told in his own words—mainly)



4



When I finally got Harmon to sit still long enough, he wanted to talk about the early days, especially his father and growing up in Stokes County, North Carolina. Harmon had his memory then and kept most of it to the end. He bragged that I would someday write a book about him, and certainly my father was a character ready for the first page. The book never developed. However, he did spend many hours before a tape recorder. It is best that he speak for himself about the times when days were young, and the hard life was the good life.

"My father," said Harmon, "Hannibal Harrison Taylor, was born June 7, 1849 near Stuart, Virginia in

Patrick County. My mother, Eleanor Virginia Sheppard Taylor, was born October 30, 1858, in Patrick county, near Stuart, Virginia."

I said, "Then what you are saying is that your parents were actually born near each other."

"Yes."

"So you know anything about how they met? Were they neighbors?"

"My father, at the time they got married, was living in Taswell county, Virginia. So he came home to visit and saw my mother and fell in love with her."

"You mean love at first sight?"

"Yes, love at first sight. He told my mother that if she did no marry

him right away that he was going back west and would not be back again. To mother, western Virginia sounded like a long trip on a buggy or a wagon, so she yielded to his high pressure and soon they were on their honeymoon. Pressure must have worked in this case; they lived together for 65 years. Mother was 17 years and 6 months when she got married. Dad was 26 years old."

"My father was a good carpenter, and could do anything that needed to be done at home or on the farm. My father and mother went to Lawsonville, North Carolina, and bought 88 acres of rolling land, mostly covered in timber, which joined his older brother George

Taylor. The first thing they did was to build a small log house with a big fireplace for mother to cook on. The next most important thing to do was to get some land cleared so they could raise something to eat. They lived in the small house for several years. After the boys got large enough to help, they decided to build a frame house about a quarter of a mile from the log one. They had brick chimneys in all the rooms and a fireplace for each room. They made all the bricks by hand, and Dad dressed all the weather-boarding by hand. I was born in the new house. They did not have any water at the new house, so Dad rigged up a thing he called a telegraph. He had a little gutter that came out of the spring. He had a wire that went from the house to the spring and a trolley car that ran on

the wire with a rope attached to it, and when the bucket would get full we would turn the big wheel and up the water would come. It was about 100yds. from the house. So that was that for years and, well, when I left home in 1922 it was still going good and several years after that. And that was how we had to get our water.”

“Since we had no electricity we had to do everything the hard way. My youngest sister and I would go down the hill to the spring to wash once a week. We would boil our water in a big black pot and had a paddling block where I would paddle the dirt out of the work clothes. When we would hear the hens cackle I would run and get the eggs and we would boil them in the big black pot.”

“What did you raise on the

farm?” I asked.

“For our money crop it was tobacco. We also raised corn, wheat, rye, oats and cane for making molasses. We boys also raised a little extra cane just for the heck of it. We also had peach and apple orchards and a meadow which we mowed for hay. Once brother Gilmer and I had loaded a big load of hay on a two horse wagon and as we started up the hill one of the mules balked and backed up and spilled all the hay. If you have never had this happen to you, you have never been real mad.”

“Did your dad have any hobbies?”

“All the hobbies were hard work and his little tooth-pulling business. People would come riding side saddle, on wagons, and in buggies to have their teeth pulled. One reason





my father had so many customers was that he made no charge whether it was one or a half dozen. Of course he had no way of numbing the teeth and some of the customers got a little unruly. He made a hickory chair with heavy rounds and he would have his customers put their hands on the rounds and pull hard while he was pulling. This was to keep their hands off the forceps. Sister Dovie Texas was his dental assistant. She said that sometimes she would have to threaten to put them on the floor and sit on them if they did not behave. Dovie is 90 years old this month (she lived to be 98) and lives alone and splits her own stove wood."

"We had a country dentist nearby but he charged 50 cent for extracting teeth. That was a lot of money then.

He made house calls with his drilling rig on the back of his buggy. He would set you out under a shade tree and pedal the drilling machine with his foot. "

"My father pulled his own teeth, only required some of the children to hold his head. He never feared pain. Not any of his seven boys ever had such nerve. I doubt if any of my children will take after their grandpa."

"It sounds like from what you've said about him, that he was a man who was going to have things one way and that was it," I said.

"That's exactly right. It would all have to be his way too."

"Did he dominate your mother?"

"Well, no, she had a lot of spunk, too. She would stand up for her rights. So they came over in NC and they built a little log cabin, one room

and that's where they started their family. They bought a little farm. It was 80 acres and they built them a little cabin in the woods. He began to clear out and first thing he knew he had enough land cleared to make a living on. The crops were tobacco, corn, wheat, and they raised about everything they needed to eat. Pretty soon after the children began to get big enough to help him and he decided he needed more room, he built a frame house. The children were big enough to make the brick, so they fixed them up a place and they made all the brick. They had a fireplace in each room."

"So they built a frame house and he dressed all the lumber himself, weather-boarded it, made the brick, and put a fireplace in each room and made it very comfortable. Anything

he needed, he'd make it. He made his own cider mill to grind apples, to make brandy. He used to make brandy and grind his own apples. So, once he had the horse going round and he stuck his thumb up too close to it and it ground his thumb off. So he went on to the doctor and just held it out there to let him take it off. He never flinched at all, no pain, no bite. If he did, didn't show it."

"He was the same way with other people, you know. He didn't think about other people having pain because he did all the teeth pulling for miles around. They'd come in buggy and wagon and they would ask to get their teeth pulled. He'd just set them up in a straight back chair and tell them to hold to the round. If they started to holler, he'd tell them to shut their mouths or he'd bite

them and it would scare them, especially black folks. It'd scare them to death and they would just hold to that chair and he'd pull it out.

"My sister said that one day that a girl had come crying. She had the tooth ache and had had it all night. Every time he'd get the forceps on the thing she'd say she wanted to spit or something. He said, 'Now if you don't behave yourself, then I'm going to put you on the floor.' Dovie said, 'Now you come here crying, I'm goin' to get Dovie over there to come and hold you if I have to put you on the floor.'"

"And so she sort of skid up and sat there waiting for him to pull all of her teeth. Of course, there was no way of numbing them, you know. It was just straight ol' pulling them. That was the past time. We'd watch

the people come in at lunch time; most of them would come at lunch time when they weren't busy. The farmers would come and some of the other people, then go back to work."

"Not one of us, I know of, except one, went to the hospital while I was growing up out of twelve children. One went to the hospital with appendicitis. That was the only one. We'd use home remedies. We'd go into the woods and get ratsbane and herbs and all that kind of stuff and make salves. That was the only kind of salves we had."

"You must have gotten a lot of courage playing the doctor," I said.

"It was a lot of fun," Harmon laughed.

by James Harmon Taylor





For J. Roger Kirkman Jr.

Loved

it was a heartbeat

you were a dream

I awoke

the illusion

shattered

I Loved

eyes the color of the torquiose my grandmother brought
from Arizona when I was a child

golden cat, all grace

skin by candle light, tasting of salt

the smell of you sleeping, sweat and cologne

waking from dreams

not now, not here

gone

never mine

But I Loved You

when pain ruled your heart

and the days grew long with heat and summer

heavy with passion and softly harsh kisses

until it was over

lost in tears, in visions of her tracing languid lines down your
body like I did once

caught in endless pause waiting for phones that never rang,

voices that were never yours

silence and six months of dreams

freedom in a world where your memory ruled

unable to escape the songs,

to take a single step that we had not taken together

And Still I Loved You

listening to other songs than the ones we made love to or
danced to or talked to
new dreams
new memories, without you,
new arms to lie in, new places to walk,
and then you smiled at me, a single frame vision of
shocking blond hair and devil driven smile
one moment before waking
to know I cannot escape

Loved.

By: C. Markell Lynch

Kali's Healing Image

Sixteen hands stretch toward the moon.
Tears descend from stars unguarded.
She sits upon the wolf adorned with Night
While Darkness fights with the sheep's clothing
Mahakali opens wide and swallows deep;
Skull bowls began to bleed and Night falls.
Sixteen hands draw toward the breast;
Darkness rules.
Wrath, with Freedom by Her side, are born
In the form of a smile on Mahakali's face.

By: Katrina W. Ogren





Dazed and Confused

The dazed and confused wanders the dark wooden forest,
trees and leaves laugh and blow smoke in his face.

Fear builds up inside him and singes his lungs,
rain stings his bare arms while his heart's levee breaks.

The dazed and confused meets the hard and the callous,
a meeting of souls in which no one can win.

Both find themselves lost in the land of confusion,
searching for the light that they can not attend.

The pair travels westward in search of the peace,
but the night is still on them, they can not break free.

Onward they forge till they meet the brave and naive,
lover of day but by the night still deceived.

The companions move on still westward bound,
in search of the light and life's blessed sound.

At the crossroads they meet the proud arrogant,
he lifts them all up but still forces them down.

For days they traveled at the quickest of pace,
the search for the light was now simply a race.

All at once they collapsed, gave into their fear,
they finally realized that there was no escape.

By: Wm. S. Lewis IV

Lost Fortresses

We'd play in it for hours at a time,
My brother and I.
I was about 7 or 8 and he two years younger.

There's no telling how long the car had been there. Probably since the mid-forties, that would have made it close to twenty years old at the time. It seemed as old as the dinosaurs.

It lay there on its bare axles,
Already being consumed by the underbrush.
The entrance was through a window, the doors would not open, one door may have been missing.

It was the smell I remember most vividly,
Grease and old oil. Musky and sweet.
We'd play with the knobs, the clutch, the radio (I think there was one), the pedals, the door and window levers, the gear stick and the huge steering wheel.
It was almost as if we could crank it up and steer it right out of there.
Rust was overtaking the exterior, but it was still quite a fortress. Although the springs were visible in several places, it was still very comfortable.

As soon as we got home from school, we'd deposit our books and race for our other world.
It was a different time, no Sesame Street, no Barney, no Nitendo, no Gameboy. We exercised our own imagination not the imagination of some TV or Japanese executive.





Last summer my grandfather died. It was the first time I'd been back to the vicinity in years. All my aunts and uncles were there, all the cousins (not seen since childhood) and their new families. My brothers and sister, Mom and Dad, my wife and newborn son.

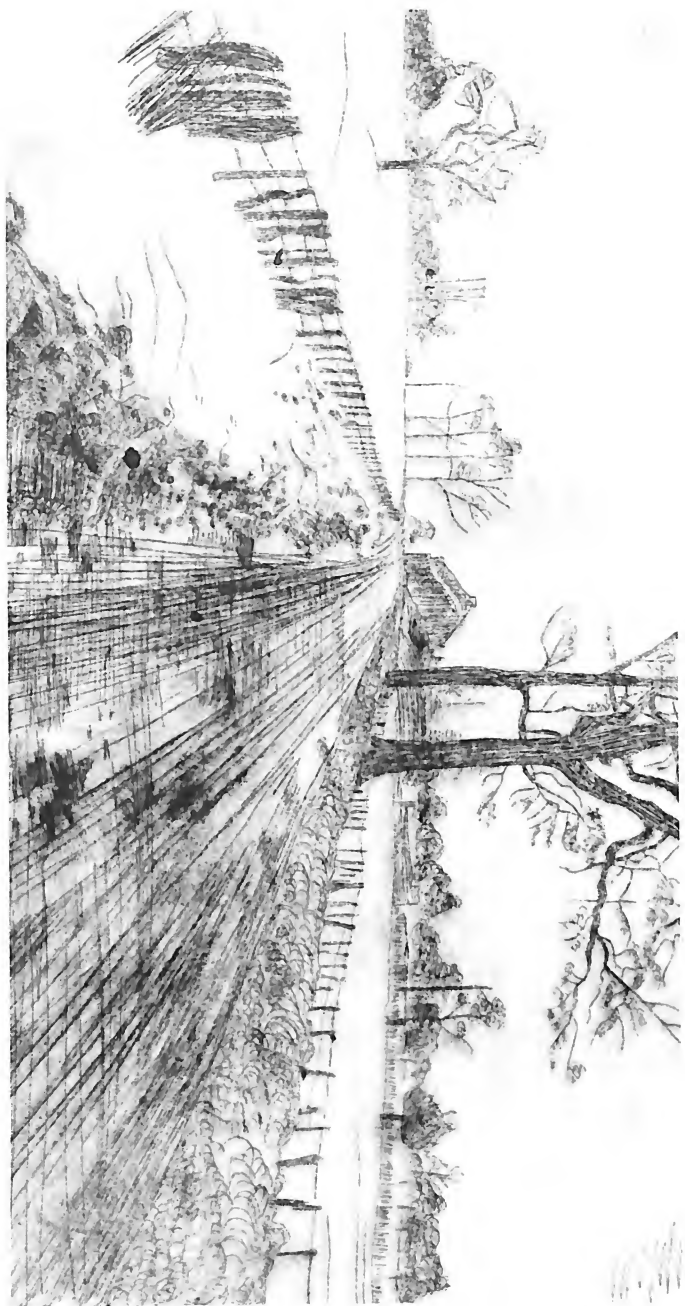
After the funeral we all went back to my grandparents, because it was a reunion, albeit a sad one. I slipped out of the melee, still in my funeral suit, and hiked through the underbrush, across the creek, battling brambles and briars, to where we once lived.

The house was long since gone and I knew that. I did not know what I was looking for, thirty years later. But still I searched.

Six months later I awake with thoughts of that car, that fortress, that smell and that time, none of which I can find again.

They are all gone. Except in my mind.

By: Mark Wilson



The Road Home

By: Yoshi Shinano



Child's Dream

The night smell musty in this room in the basement. The bed is hard, lukewarm, clammy. No sheets. They're thrown off. I'm dreaming about an old woman, living alone in her house. I get thirsty. My throat is dry, and I'm trying to drink out of the log walls, syrup of the logs. It's musty, dry tasting, but getting wet.

I'm on the clammy bed. My mouth is on the pillow. I get up to head for the kitchen. The room is dark with things on the tables lighting up parts of the room with pale white. The open stairway leads up through the downstairs air and joins with the upstairs air, moving with things under the steps.

I climb a few steps. Wanting to move quicker. An old, white-faced woman is somewhere under the steps, waiting. Her hand is reaching up

behind me. I can't see it but she will find the right step any minute. I move a little faster. I glimpsed it, just behind me, a pale white finger, with bones, and a yellow fingernail. reaching around. I'm stepping lightly, because she is trying to grab my ankle. I'm stepping hard and quick, wanting to step on her hand.

No! I don't want to step on her hand. It'll hurt and it might break. I'm trying to step away from the steps, almost reaching the top. She grabs my ankle. I'm pulling slow by firm. Breaking her grip, and off the stairs to the kitchen.

The water is cold and thin. It takes two glasses because it's so thin. It goes down and I don't feel it inside. I wish I could, because I might have to come back again if I don't feel it.

I'm walking back down the steps, trying to be quiet so she doesn't know.

I hit one creak. It wasn't much. She doesn't know. Another. She doesn't. . . She does know. I'm trotting, just barely missing her hand. I reach the bottom, and her hand catches, I trip, but break from it. It hurt, I know, I heard it crack. It hurts me to know.

I'm running back to bed, get around the side of the stairway, and stop to turn. Several feet away, from under the stairs, she rises, thin, and pale white. Ragged clothes. Her face is tall, and teeth, dark and opening. Long arms raise up and wide with claws. Walking, eyes fixed on me, dark piercing eyes. I can already feel my insides quake ready for her claws to enter. I shake and burst forward, arms open wide, and arms around her embracing hard, hugging tight, sorry for hurting. She disappears and is gone.

By: Anthony Todd Estes



Old Grey Fences

Old grey fences sit that way,
with a lean-to air,
a flaked shoulder against
the cow field wind.
Your gate hangs wide—
rusty-wired and arching down—you
nudge that quarter
to me, you old crow.
Ever the consummate grinner,
my elastic companion with the
love for shiny things.
I'll be damned if we aren't here
four years later, superfluous,
 supercilious,
the proverbial birds
on the proverbial wire
strung of some bullshit melee chaos
perspective. And you with your
grin;
a grey old post you are—
refined and not long removed from
the pristine chips of Golgotha—
I wonder, what bold-faced resurrection
have we instigated? Our own schoolmate
enigma deemed puzzle enough, no doubt; Surely with whose
deverted eyes we now see provokes great interest
in us—having cast away our own orbs
like ruinous stones slowing our
(words like) “perusement” of countless and blinding pages;
fixed
into a questioning bastard stare, I think I return your grin.
What an ugly blasphemous bird
now staring so coldly
in the wind (when spittle comes back again)
like a callous callus of a birdy
on the hand, pushing the quarter to me,
emblossomed in sweat.

By: Gary T. Mitchem





Gravestone

If I die tonight,
 tell everyone I love them.
If I don't return,
 tell them I'll miss them.
If the darkness claims me,
 let them know I cared.
If the party's over,
 give someone else the lampshade.
If I'm done with this life,
 give my mother a hug for me.
If the Valkyrie welcome me,
 rejoice for my ascension.
If my passing is done,
 shed me a tear.
If you'll never see me again,
 Remember: there's always
 the next life.

By: Scott E. Lesley

The Curse of Hands

Just as I thought I was on maturity's edge,
echoes of my heat moved me, as if I
never loved, moved me as if I
never dreamed. Planted deeply now
inside was a strange seed, planted by
friendly, but fatal curiosities of an unknowing
explorer. This poison was in fingertips
rather than the vile of a watching conscience.

Hiding in a compliment was a reservation
of an execution. The consumed moments
passed like years of time inside a quivering pulse
eagerly awaiting its end.

Softly and gently, the curse was
laid by her hands that night.
Over years I've learned to adjust
and forget
now that I've fallen off maturity's edge.

By: Chris V. Bridges





tears

wasted regrets
of what one wished for
drops that release what the heart
cannot stand.
despair,
 fear,
 pain,
surface in clear, hot pools
that stream.

gone

she cried,
 and cried,
 and cried,
cold, stinging tears
streamed down her face
she loved him so.

he wanted to cry back.
he wanted to cry back.
he did not.
he could not
he loved her too.

lost,
 useless.
her tears hit the ground.

their love gone forever.

By: Ty Richards

Fingers Break

On warm days
the sun's gaze
makes veins pump
and sap thumps
from the ground

thin green fingers
hold onto the sun
and drink and shimmer

On cold days
the sap stays
fingers freeze
chills tease
cracks in the fleshy shimmer

chills jab at veins' sockets
hands fall through arms that
reach-nubs
and die among roots

On warm days
taps raise
sap in rootscaps
little saps are wrapped
inside old nubs

little saps pop and
fingers rise toward the sun.

By: Anthony Todd Estes





Dark Horses

I'm just a little boy, a quiet little boy
and I am afraid of the dark horses.
Crouched behind the tallest oak in the forest
with littler shrubs all around me,

I shiver
because it's cold and raining
and I'm hungry and scared.
The shrubs stroke me with their wet
leaves, rain clutching them until they get
fatter and fatter
and can no longer hold on and fall hesitantly
onto the moist forest floor.

They can't find me here, the horses
whose hooves will pound me into the wet ground
and stamp my head into a red stain.

I'm just a little boy, a quiet little boy
and I am afraid of the dark horses
that come to me in the night reeking
of bourbon
and beating me black and blue.
It feels like ten, but there is only one;
though I cannot see the face in my unlit room
I know who it is—
I squeeze my eyes shut and see the dark horse:
he loves me and hates me
and grips my neck and shakes me
until I fear my eyes will pop
right out of my head.

Mommy asks, "Where were you last night?"
and he slaps her hard across the face
and I run as fast as I can,
fleeing the dark horse
that chases me

out of the blackness
and into the safety of the green
before he catches me,
before he tramples my body,
before he tramples my soul.

By: Telesa Wilson

The Monster Within

A fire within the soul
Burning for eternity
Crystals falling from the eyes
Tearing, ripping at the seams
Lights in the mind
Which no longer come on
The smell of burnt blood in the nostrils
With lost hope of recovery
A voice screaming from the heart
Felt by a sharp pain
A claw that scrapes within
Trying to escape
Teeth that tear the vessels
Essential for life
The hunger for flesh
The taste for blood
A fear in the soul
Of the monster within

By: Mandy Mooneyham





No fire,
no passion,
no touch to flame,
but yours.
In dreams, silence
the blackness of an empty theatre.
I see you there,
smiling.
Months since you entered my mind,
the longest stretch since we met.
Now,
a memory so vivid.

No fire,
no light burning,
unless it be a beacon to guide you back.
Undeniable, undefinable—
a desperation to hold you,
to make love to you until exhausted,
and then to start over.
Simplicity in the realization,
confusion in the fact I will never voice it,
never tell you that,

without you there is
No fire.

By: C. Markell Lynch

NO ROBE

don't you look at me
cause all you ever see

is me and i've no robe
not even a sheet
to cover my face,
my hands, my feet.

don't you look at me
don't you freakin' look at me

OH...OH...OH MY GOD! WHY?
did thine eye not cry for Job.
and don't you look at me
because i have no robe

don't you look at me
don't you freakin' look at me!

mommy's gone away today
its daddy's time to play

don't ever look at me
don't ever freakin' look at me

please...please?...please!
set my heart at ease

just don't look at me
please don't look





i
i am
i hide
i have no gift
i desire only love
i feel my heart escape
i have given all my flaws
i often heard laughter great
i within myself would disappear
i had one helpless seizure of hate
i had my dog put to sleep for foaming
i lost my way under a small mountain sky
i found not the trail leading back to my soul
i leaned on anger and, oddly enough, found comfort
i pressed the buttons that would make my journey quick
i gave slander, and pain, and had illegal gain, don't look
i felt sick, and i would surely have died but had i not tried
i would never have known a life with a home and i would feel bad
i cried for wealth and baby seals and for panama jack, what good

am i

don't look

am i sane?

don't you look at me
don't you freakin' look at me

i have no robe

please don't look

By: Nathan Bragg

To the kind lady who,
every Sunday morning, helps
carry off our garbage:

First, we'd like to say that
we think you're cart is neat.
We've never seen anybody
carry so much stuff
with them.

We never had a cart of our
own, mom never lets us
keep one.

We hope you're having a
nice day
we left some suckers
at the door
for you mom and dad are not home today so
they can't take it away they always say
don't give things to strangers.

There's some
lipstick, make-up, eye shadow
beside the suckers
so you can look
like us

We've decided that you would look
much better in
red
blue is for boys.
Maybe you can come in and try on our
shoes. You're not supposed to wear
slippers outside.





Have a nice day.

P.S. We left you a newspaper cause
adults like to read.

P.S. again. The boys want to say something:
We think you're ugly but
we'd like to ride in you're
cart sometime.

By: Anthony Todd Estes

How to View a Candle

When your mind is illuminated
By the leisurely burning,
When your soul finds contentment
In the blue, grey, and finally yellow pyramid,
When you meditate on the flame's freedom
To jump and even hide with the faintest wind,
And watch as the dam breaks
Into a languorous waterfall that trickles down,
But then mysteriously congeals its beauty,
You have viewed a candle.

By: Heather Love



Choose Life

By: Sabrina Barnes





i came

i came into your life
unexpected
u opened up your heart
when u thought it was closed.

i came into your life
when u were feeling alone.
i brought u happiness & joy.
i came into your life & made u c thingz
in a different light.

i came into your life &
became a part of u.
i came into your life &
u fell into luv with me.

i came into your life &
showed u
that u r capable of luving another.

i came into your life &
now u do not want to let me go...

i came into your life &
now i must go.

By: Ty Richards

Staring

into my own
personal abyss.

Wondering

what would it be like
to set it free?

Thinking

why is it there
at all?

Questioning

is it not my nature too
to be good?

Repressing

those urges base;
the monster within.

Feeling

like I'm falling
from above to below.

Riding

waves of my own creation
to the island of insanity.

Breathing

in the blowing wind
so as not to lose
my tenuous grip
on reality.

By: Scott E. Lesley





Dance

As I reach out to touch the scorching red flame
I am not burned, only consumed—
one with the fire.

The heat warms my icy soul as the connection
is made
between you and me.

We burn together, illuminating the darkness
of the world.

Like rockets we rise, piercing the cool
blue sky

as it becomes scarlet with fever,
turning and finally surrendering
day to a living twilight.

The stars, dissolving, drop from the sky
one by one
into the flame
each with only a fleeting hiss to signify
its existence.

The moon is boiling, slowly dripping from the sky,
pouring itself over the world
like warm milk.

Our flame is inextinguishable,
passionately lifting itself from within,
eagerly spreading itself out over the floor of Heaven
in awe of the flame
created by the hand of God.
We reach the final conclusion
and know that it is.

By: Telesa Wilson

“Suicide” —Sirianni

A creative reaction to one of the charcoal drawing in the Vietnam Artists Collection.

Smudges on the paper that almost...black and white. He never existed in black and white.

Grey blood seeps out of Eddie's charcoal soul, drawing death. But did he do it? Did he pull the trigger? or jump into the crossfire? Did he beg to die?

Eddie looks out of the charcoal: Eddie stands beside me, looking at his portrait of smudges. He has no stomach, no... “Did I?” Eddie whispers, reaching out to me with that hand.

That hand. The one still caked in his blood and that god forsaken dirt:

and I can't get it off my hands. My hands are, still, and I can't, caked with bloodied mud. “Get it off me!” People look and I've yelled. My hands are clean, really clean. And Eddie looks like a smudge, all tattered and worn around the edges.

I walk away, hands trembling and wiping, always wiping each other clean (of the mud). I leave Eddie standing there, ghosting his charcoal likeness. I leave Eddie in a charcoal hell called Vietnam, but he doesn't want to stay and I can't run. They've got me pinned down in the mud behind Eddie. I know he's still alive,

he's bleeding and it's mixing with the dirt, and I'm drowning in it. My god, Eddie's not dead and we're both drowning and I can't move, I can't even breath anymore.

Courthouse Metro, blue line, right escalator. Eddie didn't buy a ticket, but what are tickets to dead men. Eddie smiles. I check my watch, a habit, and he checks his (what's time to a dead man. Tell me Eddie, what's time to a...)

“Nothing just a habit. Meant to ask you, Phil, did you mean to?” Eddie asks, and I know no one hears him.





"I opted out. Why'd you stop me?" Why Eddie? tell me why you pushed me into the mud? Tell me why you let the bullets eat out your gut. It would have been better if you'd just le me.

"No, it wouldn't have," Eddie's smile fades, no longer cocky. He touches my shoulder, like a father touching his new born for the first time. "It would have been both of us. I knew you could make it."

The lights at our feet begin to flash and the metro pulls in, grinding to a stop. I get on, expecting Eddie to follow. But Eddie didn't buy a ticket. It should have been me. Me with my guts eaten out, me making

mud puddles with my own blood.
But.

Through the glass doors I watch as Eddie mouths, "So make it." And the metro lurches forward.

By: C. Markell Lynch

Fallen Knight

Had and Want climbed up the marble stairway
To submit their homage to the fallen knight.
Have was not there; (she was joining the legions,
The legions of Had,
The legions of Had.)

The pair looked down upon the humbled visage,
Once a man of valor, now turned to cold stone.
He reaches out a stone hand on faith, yet still
Weary of the curse,
Weary of the curse.

"All flesh is like the grass!" Had pronounce aloud,
While Want bowed in the silence of the coldness.
Have had never entered the chambers, neither
Would she ever try,
Would she ever try?

The spider watched from the mountains, while the leaves
Rustled, tossed by the ever changing eagle.
The bandit cared not, but looked with attention
The knight did not rust,
THE KNIGHT DID NOT RUST.

By: Chris V. Bridges





The Hidden Meadow

Pushing my hair back tight,
Tugging at my weathered boots,
I prepare to meet with you.
My departure is final
With the screech of the back door.
My walk is long and long awaited.

Your tranquility falls on me
As I fall upon you.

We play like two children.
I run constant circles around a lonely tree,
Tripping over your outstretched hands
That greet the sunlight of that fall day.
My pain, my worry, and my confusion are gone-
Gone until I leave your world and enter mine.

By: Heather Love

I don't want what you offer

I don't want the Lexus, the office,
wife, kid, loan payments, house payments,
taxes, railways,
travelouges of dust and red haze
seeping through eons of tepid
ignorance and genuflecting to
steel girders rising so high on braces
of reflecting glasses and
tuned tumorous waves of invisible
energy seeping through
microchips off of the old, old
block.

All of it is too bright.
your world is so well lit
that my eyes squint and water around the edges
of monarchal, invading light.

Keep your light—

I'll wrap myself in night
so deep that it keeps out the day
when I pull it over my face and head
and breath it in through my mouth.
There are smoke filled alleys there
with impractical truths that scream and die
at the break of day.

You seek the clean and polished places
of flourescent dawns and neon radios
where you blink and blink and blink,
and never see.

I have the other.

I have the dark thing that skitters and
shuffles out at the very edge of memory
in darkest shadows of the night,
unbending,
unbound.

I have the thing that rips and





tears at you until blood is all the color there is
and life breaks barriers of sound and light
and space and time on blackened wings
heading for some far off
far away
far out star
beyond the watching shadows of Lovecraft's eyes
This thing flies and moans and
lingers in the silence left behind
the last note from Monk's fingertips.
It flows through the pipes at night beyond all
controls and computerized outlines
of Alladin's Lamp.
It grabs you when you're flying so high that,
for an instant,
you know you'll never come down.
It rides the smoke and scotch in Janis' voice
as she makes love to you
in the Summertime,
and the livin's easy.
It jumped in Beethoven's skull,
and when the Ninth symphony was finished,
and the orchestra had stopped playing with the
last written note,
they looked up and saw it laughing at them from
his eyes, and dancing in that wild hair of genius,
because he was still conducting,
because his eyes were shut and he was stone deaf,
and he could still hear the music in his head.
It eats and grins and slobbers at the end
of a hardwood bar,
winking at you from the mirror beyond
Van Gogh's left ear.
It flies, it gibbers, and it has
teeth so sharp, talons so long,
that you cannot miss it unless you blink.
I've felt it tickling me

the first time I slipped inside
the woman I loved,
the first time I lost everything,
the first time the boarders of my body fell away
in a single moment of total
electric
ecstasy.
It was in the stars that night on the lake
when the vodka was clearer than the water,
and I laughed with mirrored teeth,
and a long-haired, goateed philosopher beside me.
It lived in my eyes,
and chewed on my intestines
until all I could do was look at her picture,
and cry,
and drink,
and then it grabbed me.
I grabbed two black markers,
and filled the white walls with words
until I passed out and slept in its arms.
I don't need your lights,
your gifts of false security under
sweating ceiling panels.
I have all I need in a drag of this cigarette.
I have all I want in the sweating night below.

By: Ensley F. Guffey





Mouse

When I lay down
under the blanket of dark
to sleep
that's when
my little friend
scampers in to scratch
the still off my night

The lights go off
with the blanket of dark
sitting on my eyes
that's him
his back
and I won't get any more
sleep tonight

He runs around
scratching at
all beams and tiles
scratching
like I scratch my head
relentless
it makes me itch

He pops up
making noises
all around the room
as if
he were in my head

running around where
I can't see him

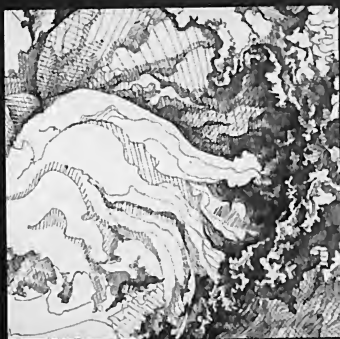
He is running
inside my head
I think I see him
and then
I realize
that was him
thinking

He rushes out
before I can gasp
and stares at me
with eyes that beetles
stuck in fur
his ears are taut and
aimed forward

He is huge
gaping over my whole view
his thin black claws are
worn where they've been
scratching
he turns and I follow
to see and go scratch
the partitions in my head.

By: Anthony Todd Estes

Leafy
Green
Scenes



By:
Susan Carlisle Bell



STANDARD VIRGINITY

Dixie drawl in opaque
picnic supper to demonstrate

basic anxiety for hedonistic causes
archaic dreams without artistic license.

Antithesis Southern Bell
just a kiss and then to hell

needed crime in estimate
suicide went up the rate

ether dense
consonance

defunct, defuse
and then reuse

keep me deep
exhume, excuse.

Exhibitionist urgency
blinded fear contingency

I am blind in fever heat
fixture change gospel neat

Gainsay mine eyesight fails
hollowness in hyperbola
eightieth, idolator inflicted
pain illogically

though I never cry my luck is very dry
I'd really rather die that to say good-bye

visitation violation
humanity in insulation

this one world jade
a finer shade
Jihad rest
peace to fade

Peace! peace! I declare
that you should joyful share
revelation Kasbah, kill and care

Ladon came to lament the shame
language still malfeasance game
masked it all in my name

onomatopoeia without the pain
quadruplicate a mountain to match a single grain

"I love you!" she said,
"Reciprocate my love."
but the moose was in the way
and the lion choked the dove.

glancing in that direction
to the scepter of iniquity
i called a thousand times
but the tether kept me free

I could not be warmed by this lead tuque (took)
the locust swarmed and the nation broke.

Unverifiable virginity
many lies among the truths
I cried to hear no answer
Vishnu grays and blues.



i grew up in the GENERATION OF GREED
but i never did the deed
they must have heard my plead
they just refused heed.

Voodoo wake walrus take
waltz and burn this death i earn
whimsy x satanic curses learn

zowie echo i feel better now
razor warm, ship in storm my life is drow
though i lost just how

you're my hero, I HATE YOUR GUTS
I'm now addicted to cigarette butts.

This is all open for discussion
so just shut the hell up
how'd they get that picture mom,
of Jesus Christ's last sup?

write down the rules: this is good that is not
lets all regulate morality and creativity.

You didn't forget the condoms,
did you?

I cannot get my zipper down.

For God's sake,
take those glasses off!

Aren't we gonna watch the show first?

By: Nathan Bragg

HER HANDS TELL ALL

My heart wrenches with the agony of desire
that is not yet there.
Forlorn it now awakens, alone, alone, alone.
When the only hope is want, and the only want is hope.
When that is gone, what is left?
Another poison? A Judas Kiss?
or just another sentence to loneliness?
It hurts me.

I wish that the dissonance of uncertainty would pass
through the melody of my life.
The constant droning of alone, alone, alone
echoes and echoes without end.
For in bottomless chasms, sound travels forever;
so does my melody. This indeed is punishment enough
for crimes not intended or committed.
I feel trapped.

Am I truly sentenced to my past?
To the curse and the one whose image has haunted me?
Joy's fellow sibling will not condemn me to alone, alone,
alone!
I will rebel, I WILL WIN!
Symbols and signals will not leave me undermined
by doubts and fears once more.
My heart was left there on the pew, her hands tell all.
I want release.

By: Chris V. Bridges





Stevie Ray Vaughan

By: Scott Goforth

Old Wives' Tales

Staring down at the light of a fire which hasn't burned in a century,
I am blinded by dreams I'd forgotten decades ago.
So when, in turning away, I fall to my knees as if in prayer,
do not damn me as pagan—
trap me in your opinions and prayers.
Stand with me and stare into the faces of the people sent to oblivion,
look into the eyes of the ones strapped to stakes and sent heavenward in ash and smoke.
Catch in their lives the lies told by small, school girls with vivid imaginations and vindictive mouths.
Look at the men with collapsing knives proving that witches don't bleed.
Feel the breath going out of your lungs as they plunge you again into the freezing water before telling you the obscenities of which you are accused.
Listen as your mouth forms the words of guilt when your mind is screaming innocence
Watch as your hand signs a confession of sins you never had the chance to commit.
And burn as they burned in the witch hunts across Europe and England.
Hang as the innocent hung in Salem and Ireland.
Kiss life and turn away because of ignorance and fear, misinformation and nightmares spread by old wives, a thousand years ago.

By: C. Markell Lynch





Skeletal Scape

By: Todd Estes